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Núr University has grown rapidly since opening its doors in 1984. The building shown above is the school's fourth location in six years. With nearly 1000 students last year, Núr is now the second largest private university in Bolivia.

## Núr University: An Educational Upstart Exceeds Expectations in Bolivia

New university aims to integrate practical and moral education with traditional academics; that and other innovations bring 1000 percent growth in six years

SANTA CRUZ, Bolivia — Upon graduation, it is usually the students who receive something—a diploma or a certificate, along with all the privileges bestowed by such a document.

At a small graduation party held here last July, however, traditional roles were temporarily reversed when six students from Núr University presented a small plaque of appreciation to the university itself.

"To Núr University, in gratitude for the integrated education that we received," read the simple brass engraving. Signed by the six students who were celebrating that evening, it was presented to Núr's president, Manucher Shoaie, in a ceremony before an audience of teachers, administrators, family members and guests.

Although perhaps a minor event, the students' presentation reflects the high regard and open appreciation that Núr University has won since opening its doors six years ago. Founded with almost no money, by a group of largely unknown educators and development specialists, Núr's enrollment has grown from 97 to 993 students since 1985. Today, it is the second largest private university in Bolivia.

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## ONE COUNTRY

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# Children and the Future

Although the sentiment has become something of a modern cliché, it remains fundamentally true: If children, the most precious of our resources, are not adequately cared for, the outlook for humanity's future is bleak.

One statistic is especially revealing: according to UNICEF, more than 40,000 children under the age of five die needlessly each day, the victims of childhood diseases that could be prevented with a few dollars' worth of vaccines or anti-diarrhoeal powder.

Who can say what contributions to civilization might have been made by these young souls?

The World Summit for Children, scheduled to bring more than 70 heads of state together in late September at the United Nations in New York, provides an important symbol of the world's increasing recognition of the grave problems facing our children—and of the increasing impetus for action.

Bahá'ís around the world welcome this renewed focus on children. It is a basic principle of Bahá'í belief that every child has a clear and inalienable right to nurture, development and protection. And Bahá'ís are involved in numerous efforts to help educate, feed, and safeguard the health of children around the world.

In addition to supporting the world's collective efforts to improve the material well-being of our offspring, Bahá'ís believe it is important to provide for each child's spiritual education and well-being.

In recognizing that children are indeed the future, it is clear that the values and standards by which they are raised will become the values and standards by which our future society will function.

Certain moral principles and spiritual truths, in this day of global interdependence, must of necessity form the foundation for any peaceful, just and prosperous human future. These principles, Bahá'ís believe, are universal in nature, and—far

from representing any narrow or particularistic ideology—deserve to be taught in all schools, at all levels. These principles include:

- The understanding that all humanity is one organic whole.
- The knowledge that women and men are equal.
- An understanding that service to humanity, as opposed to service to self, is the most noble path.
- A belief that the resources of our planet are a trust from God to the human family collectively.

With the other great universally acknowledged spiritual teachings, such as the "golden rule" and exhortations to demonstrate love for others and to be honest in all

**Certain moral principles and spiritual truths, in this day of global interdependence, must of necessity form the foundation for any peaceful, just and prosperous human future.**

endeavors, these principles can help to engender in a future generation an appreciation for diversity, a sense of justice, and the impulse for cooperation instead of conflict.

Fundamental to such a perspective is an appreciation of the spiritual history of the human race and a respect for the diversity of ways the Creator is worshipped. More than 100 years ago, Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, wrote:

"O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you... There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world of whatever race or religion derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source and are the subjects of one God... Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you."

Particularly vital in re-directing our future  
(Continued next page)



Mr. Daniel Wegener, a representative to the United Nations for the Bahá'í International Community in New York, met the United States First Lady, Mrs. Barbara Bush, on June 20 as part of a White House reception for delegates to the Education for All conference held last winter in Thailand.

## Malaysian Bahá'í Community Launches Recycling Project

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—The Bahá'í community of Malaysia has launched a major national recycling project. Initiated on Earth Day 1990, which was observed on April 22, Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assemblies have been encouraged to establish a recycling depot or store in their community. Bahá'ís would then

### Briefs:

be asked to send all materials that can be recycled—including newspapers, bottles, rubber and metal products—to that depot.

Reportedly, at least one individual, acting as the local recycling agent for his community, has already established a successful aluminium can recycling business.

The Malaysian Bahá'í community has more than 300 Local Spiritual Assemblies, which are locally elected Bahá'í governing councils.

## New Radio Series in Peru Highlights Moral Values

CHUCUITO, Peru — A new bilingual radio series, dealing with subjects such as rural family life, cooperation, cleanliness, consultation, work ethics and the value of native languages, is being produced at the Bahá'í radio station here.

"Crece Con Nosotros," which means "Grow with Us," is aired in both Aymará and Spanish. Radio Bahá'í Peru regularly broadcasts in Spanish, Aymará and Quechua. The 1 kilowatt medium wave station first went on the air in 1982. ☉

## Perspective: Children and the Future

is the education and encouragement of girls, who will become the primary educators of the next generation, and must of necessity become equal participants in the social, political and economic life of future society.

The world has paid an appalling price for the exclusion of women from an equal voice in human affairs. Where material means are too limited to make possible the educa-

tion of all children within a given community, the preference should be given unhesitatingly to girls. In this way, society as a whole gains the maximum benefit from the resources available.

Merely attending to the child's physical needs is important; but by emphasizing universal moral principles in the education of children, the groundwork for a peaceful and harmonious future society can be laid. ☉





Left: *Snow View 2*, by Tan Eng Wah. Below: *Freedom*, by Tan Chin Guan. Both paintings, along with the one shown on the opposite page, were among the more than 40 works of art displayed at the Singapore Arts for Nature exhibition last June.

delicate interpretation of nature's beauty, to abstract depictions of humanity's assault on the environment.

A project of the Singapore Bahá'í Women's Committee, the show raised more than \$3000 for the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Malaysia program to help save the endangered Leatherneck Turtle and brought strong regional publicity for the cause of conservation.

It also demonstrated how a small group of people, when committed to a larger cause, can accomplish more than they imagined.

"We first got the idea from the Arts for Nature project held in London in 1988, which was a project of the World Wide Fund for Nature—United Kingdom and the Bahá'í International Community," said Linette Thomas, a member of the committee. "We were very impressed with the brochure that emerged from that event, and then one of the Bahá'ís here who is an artist said 'Hey, we can do something like that.' And the rest of us said, 'Why not?'"

The idea seemed simple enough. Invite local and regional artists to create works around an environmental theme. Exhibit them on World Environment Day, June 5.

## The Arts for Nature: the Singapore Exhibition

SINGAPORE — Two white swans taking flight, against a snowy forest backdrop.

A herd of zebras, against an African landscape, confined in a box; a symbol, perhaps, of vanishing species.

A small girl gazing out the window at a caged bird while free-flying pigeons play on the roof.

These images—along with 40 others—formed part of a singular art exhibition here last June. The focus was on nature and the environment, and the purpose was to raise awareness of the need for conservation.

Yet despite the assigned subject matter, the paintings and sculptures of the Singapore Arts for Nature show were very diverse: included were everything from traditional Oriental landscapes, with their

A locally produced art show raises funds and consciousness to help save an endangered species





Then sell the works and donate the traditional gallery fee to the conservation cause.

### Difficulties at First

"We felt the environment was a very important issue to focus on," said Ms. Thomas. "But then we had difficulty finding sponsors. People were a little bit suspicious because we are a religious group."

Nevertheless, the group persevered. "Although there are just a few of us on the Singapore Women's Bahá'í Committee, we decided we weren't going to allow any negative thoughts to deter us from what we actually envisioned," Thomas said.

They also made it clear that they were not interested in proselytizing, an activity that is discouraged in the Bahá'í teachings. Their concern was for the environment.

Eventually, they found a co-sponsor in the Singapore branch of the Hongkong Bank, whose general manager was very active in conservation efforts. In the end, the bank underwrote all printing costs and the cost of a luncheon reception.

"We at Hongkong Bank applaud the Singapore Bahá'í Women's Committee for their efforts in helping to raise the funds which will be used to help protect one of the many living species of the earth which are under threat from man: the turtles," said Mr. R.E. Hale, the bank's general manager. "We are indeed happy to assist them in this task."

Other co-sponsors then joined the project. They included The Lee Foundation; The Kwan Im Thing Hood Cho Temple; Classa Trading (Pte.) Ltd., which donated recycled paper for printed flyers and the program; and K.T.S. (Singapore) Pte. Ltd.

### Wide Publicity

Held in the recently renovated Empress Place, the exhibition was clearly a success. Publicity was widespread, and hundreds of people saw the week-long show.

"Works of art can touch people's hearts in ways that facts and statistics can not," said Ms. Cheryl Hum, who was chairperson of the committee during the planning for the exhibition. "Through the visual arts, we aimed not only to create public awareness of the need to protect the environment, but also to communicate the critical importance of immediate action."

In addition to the show itself, the committee and the co-sponsors produced an attractive 36-page brochure to commemorate the exhibition. In addition to glossy reproduc-



Left: *Wu Yi Mountain*, by Goh Sai Kwee. Below: Mr. R. E. Hale, of Hongkong Bank, and Ms. Cheryl Hum, of the Singapore Bahá'í Women's Committee, both shown standing on the far right, mingled with a crowd of several hundred at the opening of the Singapore Arts for Nature exhibition in June.

tions of all 43 works of art displayed at the show, the brochure carried excerpts from the Statements on Nature of the world's major religions, as made for the WWF's Network on Conservation and Religion.

The first Arts for Nature program was held in London at Syon House on 26 October 1988. A collaborative project between the Bahá'í International Community and the WWF, the Syon House event—and the project itself—was formally launched by His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, that evening at a gala dinner which featured a series of special performances by well-known artists. Funds were raised that evening for a WWF rainforest management project in Cameroon. ☉

"Works of art can touch people's hearts in ways that facts and statistics can not."—Ms. Cheryl Hum





More than 65 dignitaries attended a September 6 banquet celebrating the opening of the new Office for the Pacific Region. Shown left to right are: Ms. Mary Power, a Bahá'í International Community representative from New York; H.E. Mr. Alexander Basil Peter Smart, Ambassador to Fiji from the United Kingdom; and Mrs. Tinai Hancock, director of the Office for the Pacific Region.



## Bahá'í International Community Opens Office for the Pacific Region

SUVA, Fiji — The social and economic development work of the Bahá'í International Community in the South Pacific moved into a new stage with the September opening of an Office for the Pacific Region.

The office will act as liaison between the Bahá'í communities of the South Pacific and other entities working for development in the region, including governments, United Nations agencies, the South Pacific Commission, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

"In the last ten years, there has been much growth and development here, both within the Bahá'í community, and in the Pacific region as a whole," said Mrs. Tinai Hancock, the newly appointed director of the office.

"Our relationships with governments, intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations have all expanded with this growth, and now we feel these relationships can best be strengthened by establishing an office here, to serve as a focal point for our international efforts in the region," Mrs. Hancock said.

The opening of the office was celebrated with a banquet at the Suva Travelodge on September 6. More than 65 dignitaries attended, including ambassadors or chargés d'affaires from China, Israel, Japan, the

Marshall Islands, and the United Kingdom, along with representatives from the South Pacific Commission and various NGOs. The Chief Justice of Fiji and other representatives from various levels of the Fijian government also attended.

"Recently, for example, we have worked with the South Pacific Nutrition Project,

"Our relationships with governments, intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations have all expanded, and now we feel these relationships can best be strengthened by establishing an office here, to serve as a focal point for our international efforts in the region."

and we have supported the youth program of the South Pacific Commission," said Mrs. Hancock, who is a native of Fiji. "We have also worked closely in the past with the National Council of Women of Fiji. We

expect this type of work to continue and expand."

Mrs. Hancock said that the Bahá'í International Community's contribution to such efforts will come chiefly in its ability to stimulate grassroots activity and support among local and national Bahá'í communities in the region.

"We expect also to draw on the international expertise derived from other Bahá'í-sponsored development and educational projects around the world," Mrs. Hancock said. "Much of what we do, really, adds up to networking — both within and outside the Bahá'í community."

In recent years, the number of Bahá'ís in the South Pacific region has grown dramatically. In 1973, for example, Bahá'ís resided in about 1000 localities throughout the area. Today, Bahá'ís exist in more than 2600 localities. The number of Bahá'ís in the South Pacific totals more than 75,000.

Bahá'í communities have started more than 40 separate social and economic development projects. These projects range from simple efforts by a village group to raise chickens to weekly women's literacy classes; from health and hygiene seminars to preschools for children in remote villages.

In Fiji, for example, a local Bahá'í community in the Lomaivuna area worked for several years supervising the raising of goats, chickens, pigs, bees and fish. In the



Western Division of Fiji, a Bahá'í-sponsored pre-school serves more than 100 children from neighboring villages.

On Vanuatu, a Bahá'í women's group organized a sewing project. The National Community Development Trust, a government agency, provided sewing machines and other assistance, and the group has purchased a truck with its profits.

The Bahá'í International Community has worked with the South Pacific Commission since 1978, when it was invited to send representatives to the 18th South Pacific Conference in Nouméa, New Caledonia. It has since participated in the annual South Pacific Conferences. ☉

Housed in a five-room complex on Desvoeux Road, the Bahá'í International Community Office for the Pacific Region will have a special focus on establishing a liaison point between various Bahá'í-operated social and economic development projects in the Pacific region and similar such projects undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organizations.



One of the world's seven Bahá'í Houses of Worship is located in Apia, Western Samoa. The nine-sided, dome-shaped building has won praise for its distinctive architectural design and beauty. More than 75,000 Bahá'ís reside throughout the South Pacific.

Pictured left to right: Professor Denise Torrico; Sergio Bejarano of the Bolivian Ministry of Health; and his assistants, Nichme Zamora Mustafá and Fanny Rodríguez Sala. Mr. Bejarano was administering a WHO (World Health Organization) questionnaire to students in Prof. Torrico's technical English class at Núr regarding attitudes on drugs.



## Núr University: An Educational Upstart Exceeds Expectations

(Continued from front page)

***"Not only does the university teach at the academic level, it also seeks to teach about basic principles of life. Principles such as the free investigation of truth, the elimination of prejudice and the equality of opportunity for women and men."***  
— Dr. Sarah Garcia de Betancourt

This numerical success is capped by a burgeoning reputation for academic distinction. Although Núr's growth reflects the trend towards private higher education in Latin America, it has nevertheless quickly distinguished itself for its integration of academic and practical education, its innovative administration and its unique philosophy.

### **Founded by Bahá'ís**

Although not operated by the Bahá'í Faith or any of its institutions, Núr was founded by Bahá'ís, and its philosophies of education and administration are derived from Bahá'í principles. Those principles, say faculty and administrators—most of whom are not themselves Bahá'ís—provide the underpinning for the university's distinctive approach.

Núr's academic philosophy, for example, advocates the "integration" of traditional academic knowledge with both practical experience and the teaching of certain basic moral principles—principles that include an emphasis on community service, social justice and respect for human diversity. (In

their plaque, the students referred to this concept of "integrated education.")

"The main thing that makes Núr different is this integrated curriculum," said Dr. Sarah Garcia de Betancourt, Núr's academic administrator, who worked extensively at other universities in Bolivia before coming to Núr. "Not only does the university teach at the academic level, it also seeks to teach about basic principles of life. Principles such as the free investigation of truth, the elimination of prejudice and the equality of opportunity for women and men."

"Although I am myself a Catholic, I agree with the Bahá'ís here who say that these principles are universal, and very important," said Dr. Betancourt, who also teaches history at Núr.

The principles mentioned by Dr. Betancourt and others are communicated in a series of "general studies" courses, which form part of every student's core academic requirement.

"The focus of the general studies program at Núr is unique," said President Shoaie, "because it is based on some universal social, educational and humanitarian principles



that promote peace and integration in society. The general studies requirement covers five subjects: personal development, community development, the development of civilization, the life sciences, and leadership training."

In particular, the general studies courses focus on providing students with a sense of the history of civilization, of the role of religion in history, and of the interdependence of the world's peoples.

According to President Shoaie, students are encouraged to explore these core ideas on their own, in a reflection of the university's commitment to encouraging the independent investigation of truth.

"For example, our curriculum does not advocate any one particular faith or ideology," said President Shoaie. "Rather, we assign students to do research on many faiths, including Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith. They have to research the contributions of religion to civilization, and report on that to the class."

#### Non-political Stance

Indeed, it is the University's emphasis on free inquiry—and an accompanying stress on non-partisanship—that further marks Núr as distinctive, particularly in a Bolivian context.

It is difficult to describe for the outsider the complexity of life at public universities in Latin America, where political partisanship often overwhelms traditional academics. By one estimate, it takes an average of

eight years to complete a degree that should take five years—simply because politically motivated strikes and disruptions consume so much time on campuses here.

"There are many strikes, and they are always cutting into the program, said Professor José González, who is coordinator of the general studies department. "At Núr, you can teach the whole program. And the emphasis is on quality in teaching."

The curriculum at some universities often reflects the narrow ideological concerns of whichever political party has control over the university system. Too often the emphasis is on political theory over practical training. The result is that graduates are sometimes ill-equipped to assume productive roles in society, according to Prof. González and others.

At Núr, degree programs emphasize qualities and skills that are needed by Bolivia's rapidly developing society. Bachelor's degrees are offered in six career areas: agricultural economics, business administration, commercial engineering, applied computer science, social communication science, and public relations and social promotion.

Núr's students are quick to voice support for Núr's deemphasis of politics.

"I was in the state university in La Paz for a year," said Javier Ramallo Fernandez, a 22-year-old communications major from the city of Cochabamba. "And as with all state universities, there was a great deal of politi-



In the sound studio in Núr's communications department, four students work on the sound track for a student-produced video recording. Shown left to right are: Claudia Villarroel, Javier Ramallo Fernandez, Lenín García Perez and, in the studio window, Nardun Pizarro. All are communications majors at Núr.

***“One of the key differences between Núr and the other universities here is the thrust Núr has given in the concept of community service.” — Jeremy Martin***

cal proselytizing.

“For me, the most important thing here is the ideological freedom. Even though Núr is based on Bahá’í ideas, there is no imposition of any Bahá’í philosophy. There is freedom of religion, freedom of thought,” Mr. Fernandez said.

Fellow communications student Lenin García Perez, 24, also of Cochabamba, added: “It’s very important for all people to have freedom of thought. And at the other universities, that doesn’t happen. There is no integrated exchange of ideas.”

#### **Stress on Service**

Another theme that runs throughout Núr’s academic and administrative fabric is an emphasis on community service.

As noted, the degree programs and their course work strive to meet the needs of Bolivian society. In addition, however, students are required to complete at least 200 hours of work in some type of community outreach project before graduation. These projects are often designed by the students.

Currently, for example, about 20 students are involved in an ongoing project to provide literacy training to city residents who cannot read or write. The students themselves organize and teach classes both at the university and off campus in eight different neighborhoods. Inaugurated about a year ago, the literacy project has provided more than 200 people with basic reading,

writing and mathematic skills.

“One of the key differences between Núr and the other universities here is the thrust Núr has given in the concept of community service,” said Mr. Jeremy Martin, the director of institutional development and one of the school’s founders. “For us, the university must be active in community life.”

#### **The Numbers**

Currently, about 30 percent of the student body receive some form of student discount or scholarship assistance. Graduates from the public school system, for example, receive tuition discounts that range from 20 percent to 50 percent, depending on individual needs.

Its present enrollment of about 1000 students is still several hundred short of the break-even point. Núr runs at an operational deficit of about US\$20,000 per year.

Nevertheless, the prospect is for continued growth. Currently located in a rented four-story office building not far from the center of Santa Cruz, Núr’s growth has been so rapid that it has changed locations three times since its founding.

The school has just launched an international drive to raise capital, and hopes soon to establish a permanent campus.

“We have always struggled to survive,” said Mr. Martin. “Yet we have managed to surpass all expectations. It is because we have a different vision.” ☼

A spacious foyer outside Núr’s library on the fourth floor provides a quiet place to study. The name Núr means “Light” in Arabic.





# The University as an Engine for Grassroots Development

SANTA CRUZ, Bolivia — Originally, Núr University was to have been a rural development project, aimed at helping to improve the agricultural and health practices of Bolivia's country people — the "campesinos," as Latin Americans say in Spanish.

What evolved instead was an urban university which sees its role as the training of a new generation of leaders for Bolivia. These leaders, it is hoped, will return to the countryside to assist in development there.

The seeds for the founding of Núr were planted in the early 1980s, when a group of Bahá'ís, both native- and foreign-born, began to discuss how best to assist in the development of Bolivian society.

"Most of us had worked in rural development, and we were well aware of the needs of the Bolivian countryside," said Mr. Jeremy Martin, one of the founders of Núr.

In 1982, the group—which included specialists in public health and education, a biochemist, a sociologist, and an Aymara Indian leader—founded FUNDESIB, the Foundation for the Integral Development of Bolivia.

Incorporating Bahá'í principles into its charter, FUNDESIB aims to encourage grassroots development by focusing on the individual and his or her role in society. The emphasis is on training for leadership and community service, rather than training of a strictly technical nature.

"We look at development in terms of empowering people to assume responsibility for their own development process," said Eloy Anello, a public health and international development consultant who is one of FUNDESIB's founders. "We empower people through education, through an appropriate education that seeks to develop certain capabilities that enable them to address the problems they face."

Simultaneously, the idea for starting a new Bolivian university emerged as FUNDESIB's founders explored project proposals that might fulfill the FUNDESIB model.

"We started out thinking about doing small scale basic education and literacy projects," said Mr. Martin, who is a sociologist by

training. "But then we began to think about founding a new university.

"We felt that for a new nation like Bolivia to achieve its aspirations, to truly control of its own development, it would need appropriate leadership—and the best contribution toward providing that leadership could come from a university," Mr. Martin said.

Núr's founding charter emphasizes the importance of the educational process in bringing forth the potential of every individual, and in developing an "ever-advancing" civilization as a whole. It also stresses "special attention to the needs of the long neglected rural sector" of society.

That commitment to Bolivia's need for rural development now comes largely through a focus on leadership training that is part of Núr's core general studies curriculum, which includes a requirement for 200 hours of community service from every student. This requirement has spawned a number of student-run development projects, including a literacy training program serving more than 200 people.

The school's degree program in agricultural economy, which is one of the six major degree programs offered at Núr, also reflects Núr's commitment to rural development. As well, Núr has recently begun to work with the Ministry of Education to design a program to upgrade the skills of rural school teachers.

FUNDESIB itself, Núr's parent organization, has since branched into other projects. It sponsors a rural development project in the southern "Chaco" region of Bolivia, and serves as the umbrella organization for an environmental research and development center which operates on Bolivia's high mountain plateau.

Both of these projects will be explored in future issues of ONE COUNTRY.☉

The logo for FUNDESIB, the Foundation for the Integral Development of Bolivia, shows a tree overlaid on a map of Bolivia, with the motto: "Learn to serve the community."



"We look at development in terms of empowering people to assume responsibility for their own development process." — Eloy Anello.

# Aggression: Innate or Learned?

**"Education Against Hate" conference in Israel brings together a diversity of viewpoints**

***"Hate is an issue that dominates our lives and, with today's technology, can lead to the destruction of the world."***

HAIFA, Israel—Throughout the Middle East, deep and abiding divisions between national and religious groups have long stirred animosity and mistrust—often with violent results.

A recent international gathering here brought together an unusual group in an effort to find solutions to this problem. Included were representatives from virtually every religion in the region—Christians, Jews, Muslims, Druze and Bahá'ís—along with scholars, authors and journalists of various nationalities and backgrounds.

The goal was to discuss and, hopefully, develop a new tool against hatred: education.

Sponsored by the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, the conference was titled "Education Against Hate: An Imperative for Our Time." And by the end of the three-day meeting, it was clear that some important milestones had been passed.

Although no formal conclusions were reached, the mere coming together of such a diverse group, in a region so often inflamed by hatred, seemed significant in its own right.

"Hate is an issue that dominates our lives and, with today's technology, can lead to the destruction of the world," said Sigmund Strochlitz, an American businessman and a conference participant. "In these three days we have learned from one another and we will leave enriched—and perhaps with different perspectives, if not solutions."

Held from June 2-5 at Haifa University, the conference was divided into seven sessions, exploring the roles of education, religion, literature, and the media, among other topics, in the context of hatred.

## Religion and Hate

Religion is a major force in shaping human values, said conference participants, and a major element in understanding hatred.

Some participants noted that religion itself has been a cause of hatred, suggesting that in some cases a break-up of traditional religious powers might be necessary to end hatred. "This means, in many cases, a disestablishment of religion," said Blu Greenberg, an author and chairperson of the Jewish Women Leaders Consultation.

Prof. Robert McAfee Brown, of the Pacific School of Religion, California, USA, emphasized the roles of love, justice and forgiveness in eliminating hatred. "The success or failure of this conference ... will not be determined by the quality of its papers, or the depth of its discussion... but by

Dr. Robert Henderson, general-secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America, spoke during the conference's session on the role of religion and hate. Dr. Henderson, left, is shown with Mr. Sigmund Strochlitz, a member of the board of directors of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.





the degree to which its participants gain a new understanding of those who might previously have been candidates for their hatred," he said.

Farid Wajdi Tabari, the Kadi of Haifa and a member of the Moslem Supreme Court, said it is mainly selfishness or egoism that lie behind hatred. He suggested that the major religions of the world offer "a great balsam or an elixir to overcome hatred and promote love."

Dr. Robert Henderson, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, suggested that although the world has become increasingly characterized by hatred and aggressive behavior, such behavior is not intrinsic to human nature.

*"God created us rich, noble, empowered us to be good, to be just, to be loving, to reflect His own attributes as the Creator...These spiritual principles are at the foundation of the transition that we must proceed through."*  
— Dr. Robert Henderson

"God created us rich, noble, empowered us to be good, to be just, to be loving, to reflect His own attributes as the Creator," he said. "These spiritual principles are at the foundation of [the] transition that we must proceed through," a transition, he said, that will inevitably take humanity from a group of "fragmented, warring nations" to "a federation of nations" with a "oneness whose boundaries are the planet."

"Humanity is at a critical point in its evolution as a species," Dr. Henderson said. "The destiny of humankind is to move inexorably toward unity, toward the achievement of one world."

#### **The Role of Media**

Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, who took part throughout, emphasized the importance of words in both producing and combatting hatred. He called the act of writing a moral act. "Words can kill, words

can cure, words can become prayers or words can become cheap propaganda, invoking hatred."

Mr. Vitaly Korotich, editor of OGONYOK, one of the most outspoken magazines in the USSR, urged the media to recognize their own role in creating the image of the hated enemy, making war a logical outcome. He urged journalists to take responsibility for fanning the flames of hatred, and called for a renewed ethical responsibility by the press. He also called for increased collaboration between television, radio, print journalism and publishers of school books in working to eradicate hatred and suspicion.

Television plays an important role in worldwide democratization, Mr. Korotich added. Image management by countries is now nearly impossible, he said. For example, the dismantling of the Berlin wall provides a dramatic example of an event witnessed by ordinary people everywhere. Televised images dissolve the walls between peoples that permit hatred to fester and grow, but those images are not enough in ending hatred. A systematic effort is called for, he said, including the rewriting of history, and teaching from these new texts.

The conference was the third in a series of international conferences sponsored by the Wiesel Foundation, under the rubric "The Anatomy of Hate and its Consequences." Two previous conferences were held in Paris and Boston. The fourth and final conference was held in late August in Oslo, Norway. ☼



Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel participated throughout the conference. He is shown in the center of the photograph below, in front of the microphone.



On a work day last winter, participants in the Hendersonville slave graveyard restoration project posed for a group photo. Included are members of the Hendersonville Bahá'í community, the Rockland Missionary Baptist Church, and the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church.



## Restoration of a Neglected Slave Graveyard in Tennessee Brings Dignity for a Group Long Forgotten

HENDERSONVILLE, Tennessee, USA — Working in collaboration with two local Baptist churches and a number of community volunteers, the local Bahá'í community here successfully led a project to restore an abandoned slave cemetery.

Several hundred people attended dedication ceremonies on June 10, which is celebrated by Bahá'ís in the United States as "Race Unity Day." The ceremony drew most of the project's participants, the local media and a number of well-wishers.

"This is a true act of humanity," said the Rev. Lloyd Peoples of the Rockland Missionary Baptist Church, one of two community churches who participated in the project. "We're not all the same, yet we can live and work together."

The project was initiated by Ms. Andrea Seals, a Bahá'í, who discovered the abandoned and overgrown cemetery, which abuts her property, when she and her husband, country music singer Mr. Dan Seals, moved to Hendersonville about a year ago.

"I was intrigued because it was a slave cemetery, the old burial ground for a plantation called Rock Castle about two miles away," said Ms. Seals. "But it had been unkempt and uncared-for for many years. It was completely overgrown with trees, bushes and vines, and was covered with a deep blanket of leaves. It was, to say the least, undignified."

The Bahá'ís scheduled an initial work day, and publicized it to two churches, the Rockland Baptist church and the Mt. Olivet

Baptist Church.

"We felt it was important that the community have the opportunity to get involved, because it was part of their own heritage," said Ms. Elizabeth Price, the vice-chairman of the Hendersonville Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assembly, the local Bahá'í governing council here. "But we didn't know if anyone would be interested or if they would respond. It turned out, though, that the response was overwhelming."

Ultimately, three groups—the Bahá'ís and the two churches—undertook a complete restoration and beautification of the cemetery, which included the construction of a small shelter and memorial, and an oral history project to determine who was buried in the graveyard.

"Initially, we had no names at all," said Ms. Seals. "But in the course of our investigation, we discovered the names of 31 of the people who were buried there. We interviewed people who were 80 or 90 years old, and they would say, 'Oh, yes, I remember that 'so and so' is buried there.'"

Those whose predecessors are buried at the cemetery have been especially pleased by the project. "It's really unusual in an area like this—Hendersonville, which is very affluent—that people have undertaken to restore a slave cemetery," said Mr. Robert Boone, who has ancestors buried in the graveyard. "Young people will know that they have ancestors buried here. To know that and to know they will not be forgotten, that's the most important thing." ❁



## Review: Paintings of Mark Tobey

*(Continued from back page)*

about them, and when you begin to ponder them, you become very involved with them. You realize they are not as simple as they might appear."

Mr. Tobey himself left no doubt that his practice of the Bahá'í Faith had influenced his work greatly. "I can only say that it has brought a tremendous impulse to me which I have tried to use without propaganda," he said in 1962. "Of course we talk about international styles today, but I think later on we'll talk about universal styles...the future of the world must be this realization of its oneness, which is the basic teaching as I understand it in the Bahá'í Faith, and from that oneness will naturally develop a new spirit in art."

After 1950, Mr. Tobey's paintings became wholly abstract. They depend on small, controlled hand and wrist gestures, which are painted, sketched, or even scratched into the surface of paper or canvas. He worked in a variety of media, from oil to watercolor, on everything from handmade paper to chamois.

"Pink Waves," for example, is an oil pastel on handmade paper. Done in 1962, it has a light, almost humorous feel. Delicate, wave-like tracings allow the natural swirls and grain of the paper to show through.

"Trees in Autumn," a tempera monotype

done on crumpled paper, likewise makes use of the surface of the paper itself to add detail and texture. An abstract composition in blue and grey and white, it has a luminescence that is indeed suggestive of bare branches against a colorless autumn sky—although that image comes as much from the title as anything.

Ultimately, Mr. Tobey's style defies easy categorization. "Mark Tobey has been incredibly underrated," said Mr. Ottenbrite. "His work has not received much attention in the last 15 years. Perhaps that is because you can't put it in a proper slot. He is neither a pop artist nor abstractionist nor an expressionist. He is Mark Tobey."

Mr. Tobey, who died in 1976 at the age of 85, was in some ways more appreciated in Europe than in his native America. He was awarded first prize in the 1958 Biennale di Venezia and honored by a 300-work, one-man retrospective exhibit at the Paris Louvre in 1961—the first living artist who was not French ever to be so honored. Finally, in 1974, some 70 works were exhibited at the National Collection of Fine Arts, a branch of the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C. in a show titled: "Tribute to Mark Tobey."

In New York, the show ran from May 8 to June 16. It will open again in Milan on October 11 and run until mid-November.☺

***"...we talk about international styles today, but I think later on we'll talk about universal styles...the future of the world must be this realization of its oneness, which is the basic teaching as I understand it in the Bahá'í Faith, and from that oneness will naturally develop a new spirit in art."***

**— Mark Tobey**



Margaret Ogembo, right, leads a training class for village primary health care workers in Nakinu, Uganda. The program is sponsored by the Bahá'í Office of Social and Economic Development.

# The Fine Details of Abstraction: Paintings of Mark Tobey

Mark Tobey

An Exhibition

Philippe Daverio  
Gallery

New York / Milan

NEW YORK—Translucent. Luminescent. Intricate. Delicate. Contemplative. Spiritual.

These are among the adjectives that come to mind upon pondering some 36 paintings of American artist Mark Tobey, displayed here at the Philippe Daverio Gallery in a five-week show last May and June. A second showing at the Daverio gallery in Milan, Italy, is scheduled for October and November.

Comprising the entire estate of Mr. Mark Ritter, who was Mr. Tobey's friend and secretary for many years, the show's paintings

## Review

were done primarily in the decade between 1960 and 1970, although several works from the 1950s are also included.

As a group, they reflect the finely detailed abstractions—contradictory though that might sound—that are the signature of Mr. Tobey's work. With dense fields of repeated touches, lines, and strokes, Mr. Tobey's paintings are at once simplistic and complex; intellectual and intuitive.

In many ways, with their emphatic browns and greys, dotted with spots of subtle color, the intricate web-works that characterize most of these paintings evoke the natural world, especially nature viewed close-up. They are reminiscent of a cellular network, seen through a microscope, of a weathered rock face, or of the corrugations on the bark of a tree.

"Tobey is often compared to Jackson Pollock, but the two are very, very different," said Mr. Philip Ottenbrite, director of the Philippe Daverio gallery in New York. "Jackson Pollock was an enormously physical painter. Tobey was an enormously refined painter. Their work is about totally different things."

Born in the American Midwest in 1890, Mr. Tobey spent an idyllic boyhood along the banks of the Mississippi, a typical "barefoot boy." As a young man, he discovered an aptitude for drawing. He started copying magazine covers and then moved on to sketching faces for catalog illustrations. In 1911, he left Chicago for New York's Greenwich Village, determined to make good as a fashion illustrator.

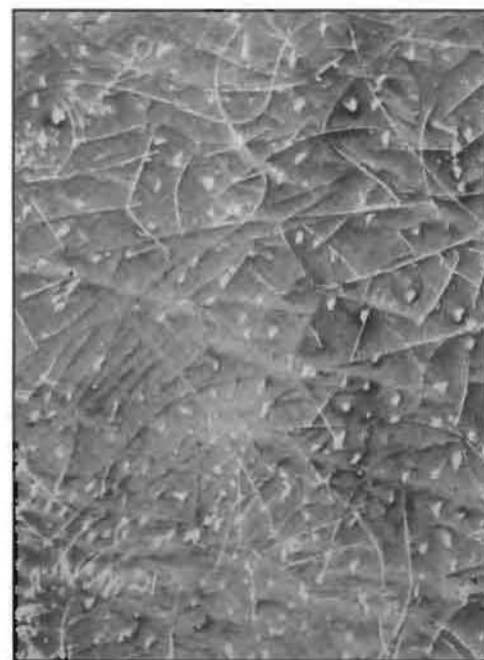
During the next decade, his skills became recognized and sought, and he did

portraits of many famous people of the time. It was during this period, also, that he was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith, which he soon embraced, embarking on a deep and lifelong study of its teachings.

His newfound religion was to have a vigorous impact on his work. "Without doubt, this was the crucial spiritual redirection of Tobey's life and of his development as an artist," wrote William C. Seitz, in an essay in the catalog for a 1962 Museum of Modern Art exhibition of Mr. Tobey's work.

Critics like Seitz have observed that the Bahá'í Faith, with its emphasis on unity and diversity, on the oneness of all peoples and religions, seemed to move Mr. Tobey to experiment with a wider range of forms and styles. He traveled widely in the 1920s and 1930s, visiting China and Japan, where he spent a month at a Zen monastery, as well as the Bahá'í shrines in the Middle East.

The art and artifacts of the Oriental world



*Composition, 1970, by Mark Tobey*

captivated him. He studied calligraphy and Chinese brush work. And the attention to detail and deliberation that he learned are apparent in his later work.

"Tobey's faith had a great deal to do with the dense, intense, translucent qualities of his paintings," said Mr. Ottenbrite. "His paintings are very human. You at first look at them and they appear to be rather simplistic. But they have a certain intensity (Continued on page 15)